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Marriage Contracts Among the Tiwi

Jane C. Goodale
Bryn Mawr College

121 It has become an increasingly common practice in recent years to reëxamine earlier analyses of kinship systems and, by selecting slightly different criteria from the ethnographic descriptions or by approaching the system from a different point of reference, to arrive at new interpretations and classifications. This has been particularly true of studies of Australian kinship systems, which have been a fertile field for reinterpretation ever since the day of Spencer and Gillen. Two of the many examples are the reëxamination of the Kariera by Romney and Epling (1958) and the reanalysis of the Wikmunkan by Needham (1962).

No one has yet attempted a reanalysis of the Tiwi of Melville and Bathurst Islands for the simple reason that none of the original investigators has yet attempted a complete preliminary analysis. Spencer visited Bathurst Island in 1912 and subsequently published a few comments and a list of kinship terms (Spencer 1914). Hart visited the Tiwi in 1928-29 and Pilling in 1953-54, and their highly readable joint book (Hart and Pilling 1960) has brought the Tiwi into prominence but has not solved the theoretical problems raised by their description of the social organization and marriage customs. I, too, visited the Tiwi in 1954[1] and ever since have been continually frustrated in attempts to describe their social organization and marriage rules in conventional anthropological terminology.

I have long been convinced—and I believe Hart and Pilling are also so convinced—that the first step in understanding Tiwi social organization is an understanding of Tiwi marriage customs. Accordingly, this paper was first written as an analysis of Tiwi marriage contracts using the age factor as a major underlying determinant of asymmetrical cross-cousin marriage rules.[2] When the original paper was read, at the Tenth Pacific Science Congress in 1961, comments from the floor convinced me that fuller descriptions of certain aspects of Tiwi social organization should be included. After the paper was rewritten to include these aspects, the colleagues[3] who read and commented on it asked for more complete and different data, for each saw in the description different possibilities for abstraction and classification.

121 I have therefore resolved that this paper shall be mainly descriptive rather than analytical. The first section deals with a description
128 of Tiwi marriage contracts with the main emphasis on the factor of relative age as an important consideration. The data, it should be

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emphasized, are presented from the point of view of a female Ego, for I strongly feel that it is only by using a female Ego that one can see the Tiwi marriage "game" as a "system." Following this, I present the kinship terminology together with some comments on the system of kin classification that are relevant to the marriage system. The last section discusses some aspects of the exchange of women between descent groups and local groups.

I am only too well aware that I do not have all the facts necessary to make a complete analysis of Tiwi social organization. It must also be stated that the relative-age analysis was a desk study based largely on what I believe to be logical deductions from the collected factual information pertaining to the age differences between spouses.[4] More field work is obviously necessary, and I hope that others who become interested in the problems of analysis and classification raised by this paper will comment and thereby suggest what they consider to be crucial areas for reinvestigation.

The Factor of Relative Age in Marriage Contracts

Hart and Pilling (1960) have described the dynamic nature of Tiwi marriage contracts from the point of view of a male Ego. My study supports their conclusion that for a Tiwi male the acquisition of wives and the acquisition of prestige are dependant variables. A Tiwi male will rarely acquire a wife through any form of contract before the age of 30. A bestowed wife, one who is promised before birth and becomes a cohabiting wife before puberty, is a valuable prestige symbol, but difficult to acquire. Thus a young man will frequently start his household with the acquisition of a less valuable but more easily obtainable type of wife, i.e., a widow, often of advanced age. Some Tiwi males never obtain sufficient prestige or political power to become involved in a bestowal contract, while others who are more fortunate may be involved in several such contracts.

My study of Tiwi marriage contracts from the point of view of a female Ego reveals some interesting differences in perspective. First and foremost is the fact that, while involvement in a bestowal contract is a cultural ideal, albeit rarely realized, for a male's first marriage, it is an inescapable norm for every Tiwi woman's first marriage. Thus, while this type of contract can be considered "preferential" but not normative from the point of a male Ego, it is acknowledged by Tiwi women as an inflexible "rule" governing their first marriage before puberty to a man whom they describe as "the one who grew me up, treated me like a father, and made me a woman."[5]

Thus a marriage contract for a man's first wife need not be—and frequently is not—the same as the initial contract leading to a girl's primary marriage. Furthermore, the form of the contract for a man's first wife is apt to vary considerably, whereas the form of the initial

5 [The Tiwi believe that sexual intercourse is the direct and only cause of menarche. Cf. p. 165, cat. 116 -- Analyst.]

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183 contract for a girl's primary marriage follows a consistent cultural
582 pattern.

In any discussion of a marriage system all the varieties of
[121] marriage contracts must be considered. If, however, one variety is found to be more frequent, preferred, prescribed, or invariable, then that is the one to which all the others must be related. In the Tiwi marriage system there is no difficulty in determining which type of contract should be considered basic to the others. The initial contract which leads to a first marriage of a Tiwi girl is prescribed and invariable and is thus necessarily the most frequent from the point of view of a female Ego, and it is also a preferred contract from the point of view of a male Ego. In the following discussion, I shall refer to this type of contract as a Type A contract. Types B, C, and D are all contracts leading to secondary marriages of Tiwi widows and will be briefly discussed later.

584 A Type A contract is made during the five-day period in which
606 a girl is isolated in the bush at the time of her first menstrual period. Although she has been living with her first husband, she is separated
[88] from him at this time. When she again returns to her husband's camp, she is not only considered to have reached the status of a woman but also that of a mother-in-law. While she is in the bush, her father places a spear between her legs as she sleeps and then presents it to a boy or man whom he selects to serve his daughter as a son-in-law. The spear is regarded by the recipient as a symbol of a bestowed wife yet to be born to his young mother-in-law. By accepting the spear, the son-in-law becomes obligated to his mother-in-law; from that moment on he must supply her with food and goods and such services as she may request at any time. In return, she is
[582] held solely responsible for seeing that her first daughter is sent to his camp when she reaches the wifely age of eight or ten. After receiving the first daughter, the son-in-law is expected to continue his services to his wife's mother, in return for which he can expect to receive other daughters subsequently born to her. The initial contract continues until either the son-in-law or mother-in-law dies. If either fails to honor his obligation, however, the other may terminate the contract. A Type A contract is therefore essentially a contract between a mother-in-law and a son-in-law. The arranger of the contract is the mother-in-law's father.

582 The Tiwi, like the majority of Australian societies, consider cross-cousin marriage to be the proper form of marriage arrangements. For the sake of simplicity, I shall conduct the following analysis as if the preferential marriage pattern involved first cousins, although in fact it generally involves second cousins. For the purpose of viewing the system from the standpoint of relative age the distinction between a first and a second cousin is irrelevant. The question of classificatory cousins will be deferred until the kinship terminology is discussed.

The following analysis of Type A contracts in terms of the factor of relative age will show that the selection of a FaSiSo rather than a

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MoBrSo to be the first husband of a girl is not merely a question of preferential choice; a FaSiSo is actually the only cross-cousin of the appropriate age to be considered as a party to a Type A contract. 582

As a first step, let us consider the expected relative ages of the principal parties to a Type A contract: the mother-in-law, the son-in-law, and the expected daughter-wife. A girl becomes a mother-in-law at puberty. For the sake of convenience we may consider this to be at the absolute minimum age of ten. A boy becomes a son-in-law at an age of not less than ten, and he may well be older than this. The minimum age of a Tiwi male is determined by his physical ability to hunt for and otherwise serve his mother-in-law in order to fulfill his part of the contract. 582 606 [581]

We cannot expect the future daughter and wife to be born, on the average, for at least five years and conceivably not for twenty years after the contract is made. However, again for convenience, let us assume that, on the average, the promised daughter will be born ten years from the date of the contract, i.e., when both the mother and the son-in-law are about twenty years old. The young girl will not become a cohabiting wife for approximately another eight or ten years, at which time her promised husband will be at least 28 to 30 years of age. Thus an average difference of twenty years between the ages of a girl and her first husband is to be expected—a difference which is dictated solely by the form and nature of the initial Type A contract. 582

Hart (1930: 282) believed that this twenty-year age difference was largely a result of the excessive practice of polygyny quite evident in his time (ca. 1930). However, in 1954, when most polygynous households had been broken up, an analysis of age differences for all primary unions for women in my sample still reflected the same disparity. Few men under the age of 30 had received wives, and only one girl over the age of ten had not yet been given to her promised husband. The average age difference between wives and first husbands was 18.9 years, with a range of from three to 54 years (Goodale 1959: 72). [114] [595] [593]

I shall next consider the expected relative ages of parents, siblings, and the children of siblings (cousins). If there is a twenty-year age difference between husbands and wives, it logically follows that the same age difference will also exist between the mothers and fathers of children. A woman can expect to have children by the age of twenty, while a man will not be expected to have legitimate children until about the age of 40.. If we assume that siblings are of the same relative age (there being a 50/50 chance that brothers and sisters are older or younger), then we can expect that a sister will, on the average, have a child twenty years before her brother has a child. Thus it can be expected that the FaSiSo of a female Ego will be twenty years older than she is, and that her MoBrSo will be twenty years younger. In arranging the primary marriage of a girl, it is thus virtually impossible that she be promised to a MoBrSo who by expectation is twenty years younger than she, and who indeed is 582 593 582 605

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582 probably not even born when she reaches the wifely age of ten. A
605 FaSiSo, on the other hand, is a cross-cousin belonging to the correct age group to be a party to the initial marriage contract. Relative age, therefore, determines that a Type A marriage contract, which is culturally universal for a woman's primary marriage and preferential from the point of view of male prestige, results almost inevitably in unilateral cross-cousin marriage between a MoBrDa and her FaSiSo.

582 The preferred form for widow remarriage among the Tiwi is to a
587 younger brother of the deceased husband. This type of remarriage contract stems directly from the Type A contract and may be considered a continuation thereof. It is therefore here classified as a Type A2 contract. As a woman grows older, when and if her Type A contract or its continuation runs out, alternative choices for secondary husbands are available to her, and acceptable to the Tiwi, among other cross-cousins.

582 A comparable method of analysis indicates that, as between the
[595] sons of a father's elder and younger sisters, a woman's primary marriage under a Type A contract is very much more likely to be with her FaElSiSo, and that under these circumstances she will probably enter her husband's household as a second and junior wife. Her elder co-wives play an important part in her education as a wife.

582 After she becomes a widow, however, she may become the first wife,
587 with the title of *teremagute*, of a FaYoSiSo or of a MoElBrSo through
593 a Type A2 or B contract. A MoYoBrSo, however, may be expected to be considerably younger than Ego, and my analysis of all marriages in 1954 showed that only after the age of 30 do we find women married to husbands younger than they. Such a marriage can never be the result of a Type A contract but may occur under contracts of Types B, C, or D (see below).

Not only does the twenty-year average age difference between husband and wife under a Type A contract have the effect of practically limiting the choice among cross-cousins for a woman's first husband to a father's elder sister's son; it also means that a woman may expect to have at least two husbands during her lifetime. Indeed, she is likely to have a series of husbands whose ages relative to her own are successively younger until, as an elderly widow, she may well become the first wife of a man very much younger than herself.

Classification of Tiwi Marriage Contracts

584 The form and nature of Tiwi marriage contracts cannot be understood merely by looking at the results of the contract, i.e., who marries whom. One must also look at who has the authority to make the contract, who are parties to the contract, who implements the contract, and who can change a contract. Among the Tiwi the rights, duties, and obligations that pertain to all these aspects of a marriage contract are specified and reside in different individuals at different times in a woman's life. Here again the age factor must be considered, for while these rights, duties, and obligations lie in the

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hands of a limited number of specified relatives of the woman, the privilege of exercising a particular role in a marriage contract depends on the individual's age relative to others holding similar rights and relative to the woman involved in the contract. I have chosen to base the following classification of contracts on the single factor of who has the right to make the contract.

584

Type A Contracts

A Type A contract involves four individuals. The authority to make the contract resides solely in the hands of the bride's mother's father. At the time the contract is made, this man is at the expected age of 50—the age when a man is at the height of his political career. Acquiring wives for himself to further his career and maintain his prestige is only one of the activities involving marriage contracts in which a Tiwi male is engaged at this time of life. As a father, he has a duty to look after the welfare of his daughters even after they are married. As an elder in a matrilineal descent group, he has a similar duty toward all younger members of that descent group, male and female. By arranging a correct Type A marriage contract, a Tiwi man can fulfill two duties at the same time. He can provide his daughter with a son-in-law, whom he selects on the basis of potential economic and political ability and who, if of roughly the same age as the daughter, can be expected to provide her, under the terms of the contract, with continued support throughout her life. By selecting a young man in his own descent group (his sister's daughter's son) to provide this support, he at the same time assures this young man that he will eventually obtain a bestowed and preferred type of wife which will help him on his road to prestige.

[603] [554 595] [593] [614]

The arranger of a Type A contract may be dead by the time the bride is of an age to be given over to her selected groom. The rights to implement the contract, consequently, do not permanently reside with the arranger, but rather they are the duty of the mother of the bride. They are not given to the mother's husband, even if he is also the bride's father. In the space of time that may well elapse between the arrangement of the contract and its implementation, the bride's mother may have a number of husbands, each of whom may have different axes to grind and varying motives for changing the selection of the groom. The right to change any Type A contract belongs to both the mother of the bride and to the groom; if either does not live up to the obligations of the contract the other may consider it void.

A Type A contract, therefore, is one which preferentially and frequently results in a marriage of a MoFaSiDaSo to a MoMoBrDaDa and in a marital union between two matrilineal descent groups. This arrangement is unaffected either by the death of the arranger or by any secondary marriage of the bride's mother to a man who, though the real father of the bride, might possibly belong to a descent group other than the two originally involved in the contract.

[614]

The enduring quality of a Type A contract over a span of two generations is a most important aspect of the total marriage system

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582 of the Tiwi. Any variation from the proper, preferred form of a marriage contract in one generation will not normally have any effect on the marriages of the succeeding generation (indeed, there may not be any succeeding generation if the woman is past child-bearing age). When and if the effect is felt in the marriage contracts of the second descending generation, approximately 80 years will have elapsed, i.e., time enough for necessary social adjustments to have been made and accepted. And since a woman's husbands have no control over their daughters' initial marriages, variation from the patterned norm of unilateral cross-cousin and descent-group exchange is not only allowed but is a frequent occurrence. While certain alternatives are preferable, such as a cross-cousin from a different descent group, marriage with relatives other than cross-cousins is permitted with certain limitations.

Type B Contracts

584 A Type B marriage is one which is arranged by a bride's father or mother's husband. A bride's father has a right and a duty to arrange a daughter's marriage if, and only if, her Type A contract has become void, either because of the death of her promised husband and the lack of any legitimate (A2) heirs to her Type A contract, or because her mother has deemed the contract void because of non-fulfillment of obligations on the part of the promised husband. Although a marriage resulting from a Type B contract may in fact be 589 the first actual marriage of the bride, it is considered a secondary 587 marriage by the Tiwi, and therefore the selection of a groom by the bride's father need not necessarily be confined to the preferential category of FaSiSo. Because the bride's father also has obligations to his own descent group, he may well give his daughter to a member of his matrilineal sib. This may or may not be the same descent group as that from which the first groom was selected. The bride's [593] father, if he is a man "on the way up," may also make "daughter exchange" an essential part of a Type B contract.

Type C Contracts

584 A Type C contract is one which is arranged by a woman's brothers. When a woman's father dies, her brothers inherit the duty 587 to look after her welfare, and, as this duty applies to their sister's 593 marriage, they may well find themselves in a position to arrange a secondary marriage for her. Since they usually belong to the same descent group as their sister, they need not necessarily consider descent-group obligations in the choice of a groom. Brothers, like fathers, may well make the direct exchange of women an essential part of a Type C contract.

Type D Contracts

A Type D contract is one which is ostensibly arranged by a woman's sons, after the death of her brothers. If a young man who

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is desirous of starting his household has inherited the right of arranging his mother's remarriage, he may well enter into a contract involving an exchange of mothers with another youth in a similar position. While a son is accorded this right, I suspect that in many of the cases of mother exchange the real arrangers are the mothers.

Tiwi Kinship Terminology

For the sake of the record, I present herewith the kinship terms which I collected in 1954. It must be understood that my major informants on the classification of kin were women. Although most of the terms were also checked with male informants, through oversight this was not done in a few instances. Although a full discussion of the terminology would perhaps be valuable, limitations of time and space compel me to limit my comments to matters directly pertinent to my discussion of the marriage system. Unless otherwise indicated, all the terms listed are employed by male as well as female speakers.

Sibling Terminology

1 *iwuni:* elder brother. Affinal application: WiSiHu, MoBrDaHu (ws).
2 *iwini:* younger brother. Affinal application: WiSiHu, FaSiDaHu (ms).
3 *imbunga:* elder sister. Affinal application: HuBrWi, MoBrSoWi (ws).
4 *imbaka:* younger sister. Affinal application: HuBrWi, FaSiSoWi (ms).
5 *inggalabini:* half brother (see discussion below).
6 *inggalabunga:* half sister (see discussion below).

The regular sibling terms (1 to 4) are differentiated on the basis of sex and relative age, and they are extended on Ego's generation to all parallel cousins, including remote ones. A special set of terms (5 and 6) is restricted to some siblings and parallel cousins. The criterion for their differentiation, as stated by the Tiwi, is that they refer to half siblings by the same father whose mothers belong to different matrisibs. The only parallel cousins to whom they apply, I believe, are first cousins; distant parallel cousins are definitely called by the regular sibling terms (1 to 4) regardless of their sib affiliations.

The terms for full siblings are also extended to certain collateral relatives on the second ascending and descending generations. Thus the distant parallel cousins of MoMo and FaFa are called by the terms for elder sibling, *iwuni* or *imbunga*, and the distant parallel cousins of SoCh (ms), DaCh (ws), SiDaCh (ms), and BrDaCh (ws) are called *iwini* or *imbaka* (younger brother or sister).

Cross-cousin Terminology

7 *imbuari.* Affinal application only: Hu, HuBr, SiHu (ws), WiBr.
8 *imbunjinga.* Affinal application only: Wi, WiSi, BrWi (ms), HuSi.
9 *matumuinga* (or *matumuini*): MoBrDa (ws), FaSiSo (ws). Affinal application: "Z" Hu (ws). My data are inconclusive as to whether male speakers use this and the following term in the same way.
10 *matumuga:* MoBrDa (ws), FaSiDa (ms). Affinal application: "Br" Wi (ws).

601 582 It became apparent to me, when I was collecting kinship terminology, that actual genealogical connection was an important factor in Tiwi kin classification and also, of course, in determining expected behavior. It is perhaps for this reason that I have always viewed the system of preferential marriage as concerned with actual second cross-cousins rather than with classificatory cross-cousins however distantly removed. First cross-cousins are definitely considered a "little-bit-wrong-way." Unfortunately my actual genealogies are too few and too shallow to shed much statistical light on the problem. It has also occurred to me that with extreme polygyny and obligatory remarriage there should be more first and second cross-cousins available to Ego than with monogamy or limited polygyny.

601 With their strong preference for unilateral cross-cousin marriage it might be expected that the Tiwi would have a Sudanese type of cousin terminology in which cross-cousins would be terminologically differentiated on the basis of whom one could and could not marry. When I phrased this question to my women informants, however, I could find no such discrimination. Women do, nevertheless, make a terminological distinction between cross-cousins to whom they are technically married before birth and those whom they may marry in the future when and if their Type A contract lapses.

585 881 Here I must interject some additional ethnographic information. At the conclusion of a girl's puberty ceremony, she returns to the camp of her husband (*imbunei*), where she is painted. Then her husband and his brothers, all of whom she also calls *imbunei*, line up with the youngest first and the actual husband last. One by one they hit her with a feather pompom (*iokwiinga*) until the husband's turn arrives. At this point the girl runs, and her husband pursues her, catches her, and makes her kneel by a tree, which is marked. I have chosen to regard this ritual as a marriage ceremony in which the Type A contract is finally validated with all its ramifications. The [582] fact that the husband's brothers are terminologically classed even at this time with the actual husband and play a part in the marriage ceremony may be regarded as validating the continuance of the Type A contract through successive remarriages (of Type A2) to the younger brothers of the original holder of the contract.

587 601 If a woman survives all her *imbunei*, she becomes eligible to marry any of her other cross-cousins, either matrilateral or patrilateral, through contracts of Types B, C, or D. It is these cross-cousins, who did not become auxiliary "husbands" under her Type A contract, to whom she applies the term *mawuninya* or its variant, *mawuninï*.

601 ## *Terminology in the First Ascending Generation*

11 *tringani*: father; also FaBr, FaFaSo, FaFaBrSo, MoBroFa, MoBroFaBr. Affinal application: MoHu, MoBroDaHu, HuBroBr.

12 *ingwuri*: mother; also MoSi, MoBroDa, MoBroSiDa, FaFaSiDa. Affinal application: FaWi, MoBroFaWi, HuFaSi.

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13 *ilimani:* mother's brother; also MoMoSo, MoMoSiSo, MoFaFa. Affinal application: HuFa, FaSiHu, MoFaMoHu. 601
14 *intinganinga:* father's sister; also FaFaDa, FaFaSiDa, MoFaSiDa. Affinal application: HuMo, "MoBr" Wi.
15 *timandinga:* classificatory "father's sister"; also MoMoBrDa. Affinal application: MoBrWi, WiMo (before contract).
16 *ambrinua:* wife's mother (after contract); also DaHu (ws) after contract.

While the Tiwi make no terminological distinction between an actual and a classificatory MoBr (*ilimani*), they do distinguish between an actual FaSi (*intinganinga*), with whom the wife of a classificatory MoBr is classed, and a classificatory "FaSi" (*timandinga*) who is the wife of an actual MoBr. Female informants say: "We cannot marry the son of a real mother's brother, but a long-way mother's brother's son is all right." Male informants phrase the rule differently: "We cannot marry the daughter of a real father's sister; we call our mother-in-law *timandinga* before the contract and *ambrinua* afterwards." This terminology, together with the informants' statements, rather clearly implies unilateral cross-cousin marriage. 582 601

Terminology in the First Descending Generation

17 *imerani:* son (ms); also BrSo (ws), MoBrDaSo, DaDaSo (ms), BrDaDaSo (ws). Affinal application: DaHu (ws) before contract, SiDaHu (ms), SiDaDaDaHu (ms), DaDaDaHu (ws). 601
18 *imeraninga:* daughter (ms); also BrDa (ws), MoBrDaDa, DaDaDa (ms), BrDaDaDa (ws). Affinal application: SoWi (ws), SiSoWi (ms) DaDaSoWi (ws), SiDaDaSoWi (ms).
19 *morti:* son (ws); also SiSo (ms), DaDaSo (ws), SiDaDaSo (ms). Affinal application: DaHu (ms), BrDaHu (ws), DaDaDaHu (ms), BrDaDaDaHu (ws), MoBrDaDaHu.
20 *maringa:* daughter (ws); also SiDa (ms), DaDaDa (ws), SiDaDaDa (ms). Affinal application: SoWi (ms), BrSoWi (ws), DaDaSoWi (ms), MoBrDaSoWi.

Although the terms appropriate to the first ascending and first descending generations are in general kept distinct, they are to some extent interchangeable when warranted by differences in relative age and the behavior associated therewith.

The applications of the terms *morti* and *maringa*, in contrast to those of the terminology in the first ascending generation, suggest a rule of bilateral cross-cousin marriage with sister exchange. The rest of my analysis, however, indicates a strong preference for unilateral cross-cousin marriage and the impossibility of sister exchange in Type A contracts. The seeming inconsistencies may, of course, reflect a period of uncompleted change in social structure, but this lies outside the province of the present paper, which is concerned with showing how the system operates today. 182 582 583

Terminology in the Second Ascending Generation

21 *amini:* mother's father; also MoFaBr, FaMoBr. Affinal application: MoMoHu, FaMaSiHu. 601
22 *ama:* father's mother; also FaMoSi, MoFaSi. Affinal application: MaFaWi, MoMoBrWi.

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601 23 *angamani:* father's father; also FaFaBr, MoMoBr. Affinal application: MaMoHu, MoFaSiHu.
24 *imaninga:* mother's mother; also MoMoSi, FaFaSi. Affinal application: MoFaWi, FaMoBrWi.

Unlike *amini* and *ama*, the terms *angamani* and *imaninga* are not indefinitely extended collaterally, the more distant collateral kin being classed as elder siblings, i.e., *iwuni* or *imbunga*.

Terminology in the Second Descending Generation

25 *inimini:* daughter's son (ms); also BrDaSo (ws). Affinal application: DaDaHu (ws), SiDaDaHu (ms), "Si"Hu.
26 *inimunga:* daughter's daughter (ms); also BrDaDa (ws). Affinal application: DaSoWi (ws), SiDaSoWi (ms), "Br"Wi.
27 *intemili:* daughter's child (ws); also SiDaCh (ms). Affinal application: DaDaHu (ms), DaSoWi (ms), BrDaDaHu (ws), BrDaSoWi (ws). This term is used self-reciprocally and is quite often replaced by sibling terms (*iwini* or *imboka*) for distant kin.

Exchange Between Descent Groups

582 614 Consideration of symmetrical versus asymmetrical cross-cousin marriage is but one way of looking at the Tiwi marriage system. Let us now look at marriage as a system of exchange between descent groups and between local groups.

From both the male and female points of view, the preferred marriage is to a member of Ego's father's matrilineal sib. Of all the marriages I recorded in 1954, 66 per cent were to members of the father's matrisib, and there was no significant difference by sex. These figures were substantiated by statements from informants expressing the preference for the exchange of spouses between two sibs. As in some of the kinship terminology, there is no indication here of asymmetry in the system.

Let us examine some of the ethnographic ramifications of sib exchange. Though a girl can be said to marry into her father's sib, it is more correct to view this as a marriage into her mother's father's sib, for it is her actual MoFa who arranges her Type A marriage, and this man is obligated to the men of his sib to help them acquire wives. If Ego's mother has also married correctly, then Ego's father's sib and her mother's father's sib will be the same. However, it is possible that her MoHu may not be a member of the same sib as her MoFa. This might well account for some of the 34 per cent of "incorrect" marriages in my original analysis, which only took account of the father's sib.

614 [842] [775] From the point of view of a male Ego it is also important, but for different reasons, to marry a woman of his father's sib. A man's children come to him first in a dream and are then directed by him to their proper mothers. Unborn children (*pitapitus*) already have matrilineal sib affiliations and thus must be born to mothers of the same sib. Tiwi fathers call this dreaming of children "finding," and, if a man is unable to "find" any children, his deceased father is ex-

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pected to help him. If a man has married a woman in his father's matrisib, then his father and his children will be in the same sib. Since only a dead father can so help his son, we have here an expression of the unity and mutual support of a sib and its members in the previous life and the afterlife as well as in the present life. It is important, I believe, to add here that the Tiwi do not believe in reincarnation.

It is interesting to speculate, on the basis of the above, what happens if a man marries women of different sibs. If his mother has also married men of different sibs, Ego will have "fathers" in different sibs to help him find children for his various wives.

Thus, as far as sib exchange is concerned, the Tiwi marriage system is a symmetrical one. When we consider the entire social system of the Tiwi, we see a tendency toward atomism. There are 22 matrisibs, grouped today into five exogamous phratries. Sib membership in phratries is subject to change (Pilling 1957), and the phratries themselves have segmented twice since Hart's visit in 1929. We consequently cannot consider the phratries as stable units in the social organization, and indeed the Tiwi themselves do not. If all marriages were correctly arranged as exchanges between two sibs, we would have eleven independent and symmetrical marriage systems. When this possibility is considered in relation to the data on Tiwi local organization, the potentialities for further symmetry and atomism are quite evident.

Exchange Between Local Groups

There are ten major land divisions on Melville and Bathurst Islands, called by the Tiwi *tungarima* or "countries." Rights to the land of the *tungarima* are determined, for both males and females, by the location of the grave of one's father, and there is a marked preference for patrilocal residence. The *tungarima* are, in themselves, agamous. They are, however, subdivided into smaller districts, each inhabited either by a single large patrilocal extended family or by a group of closely related smaller households. Since incest regulations dictate that extended families are exogamous, we may consider that in many cases, if not all, the local group will also be exogamous.

Unilateral Type A marriage contracts will therefore involve a minimum of three such households or local groups. But the marriage system might still be symmetrical within the *tungarima* or country organization, and the total effect might be to localize the matrisibs in pairs. Each country could then be considered as comprising an independent marriage system. The *tungarima* do reveal marked political, economic, and ceremonial independence, but at least today the matrisibs are not localized. The mythology on the origin of the sibs (Mountford 1958), however, strongly indicates that they were at one time conceived as being localized, and this would account for the stated existence of local spirit-child centers with sib affiliations

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582 and for Tiwi fathers' statements that they can only "find" children
614 in their own country.

Today, with nonlocalized sibs, both the sib and the local group are
582 considered in the exchange of woman, which is direct with reference
614 to sibs but indirect with reference to local groups. Such exchange
may in some cases involve sibs and countries or *tungarima*, in others
621 sibs and districts or subcountries. I found that approximately 50 per cent of local-group exchanges were between *tungarima* and 50 per cent within the *tungarima*.

582 With local-group exchange and unilateral cross-cousin marriage preferred and predominant, we have an indirect but circular marriage exchange system. We cannot, however, consider the entire society as being involved in a single marriage exchange system. The system is best seen from the point of view of a single male Ego, whose marriages are systematized according to rules which are society wide, but whose actual marriages are determined by past affiliations which can be and often are variable with respect to sib and local-group exchange.

554 That the Tiwi system is Ego-oriented is most evident when a male Ego dies and his relatives foregather for his funeral ceremonies
571 (Goodale 1959). If such an Ego has lived a full life, he will be affiliated at the time of his death with a number of social groups. He is affili-
764 ated by birth with a matrilineal sib. By his father's death he is affiliated with a local group and a *tungarima*, which may or may not be the same as the group with whom he currently resides; in either case he is affiliated with the latter and will be buried among them. Through marriage, Ego is likewise affiliated with one or more additional sibs and local groups.

601 Only those persons who belong to the several above-mentioned groups with which the deceased is actually affiliated are expected to
764 honor him by attending his funeral ceremony. When death occurs, these individuals are terminologically reclassified into four cate-
602 gories, from the members of each of which similar behavior is expected. The spouse and spouse's siblings become *amburui*. Cross-cousins, MoFa, FaMo, BrDaCh (ws), and SiSoCh (ms) all become *yempi*. Siblings and parallel cousins, MoMo, FaFa, BrSoCh (ws), and SiDaCh (ms), regardless of their sib affiliations, are classed together as *pudawi*. All kinsmen in the first ascending and first descending generations are classed as *unandawi*. Since, however, there is a distinct role differentiation between Fa, FaSi, and SoCh (ms), on the one hand, and Mo, MoBr, and SiCh (ms), on the other, I suspect there may be a terminological distinction which escaped me, inasmuch as these "funeral terms," with the exception of *amburui*, are no longer in use.

Conclusion

582 In this paper I have considered the form and nature of the varying types of contracts that lead to marriage among the Tiwi. I have

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discussed the factor of relative age as a major determinant of unilateral cross-cousin marriage in the particular type of contract which is universal for first marriages among females and is also the preferred contract for males. I have also described several variant patterns of Tiwi marriage contracts and have shown that these cannot be considered as alternatives to the preferred type but rather as additional patterns which apply only to a woman's secondary marriages. These additional types of contracts are also, to some extent, conditioned by the relative ages of the participants, but the resultant form of marriage may vary from a continuance of patrilateral cross-cousin marriage to matrilateral cross-cousin marriage and even to marriage with certain relatives who are not cross-cousins. The wide variation in contracts leading to secondary marriages for women does not affect the continuance of preferred unilateral cross-cousin marriage or the exchange of wives between particular descent and local groups until the second generation after the variant marriage. Consequently, any change in the social organization of the Tiwi brought about by variations in marriage contracts is a gradual change, but it is also an inevitable and accepted form of change. The Tiwi rightly consider that as individuals they have considerable freedom in the selection of mates from almost any descent and local group and even from among a number of categories of kinsmen. Their Ego-oriented marriage system provides both stability and flexibility, and this is reflected in their system of kin classification.

NOTES

1. The field work on which this paper is based was undertaken in 1954 at the Snake Bay Native Settlement on Melville Island and was jointly financed by the National Geographic Society and the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.
2. In 1959, I used the relative age of spouses in a preliminary analysis of Tiwi unilateral cross-cousin marriage (Goodale 1959). It was with considerable pleasure that I found that a similar analysis by Rose (1960) had quite independently arrived at the same conclusions. Even more interesting was the fact that in cases where I had to calculate expected ages for many of my kin relations, Rose, with more complete age data, could give the average and range in ages for the same relatives, and that in most cases his "average" and my "estimated" ages were the same or within one or two years of one another.
3. For their valuable comments, criticisms, and advice I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to Robbins Burling, Ward H. Goodenough, Edward B. Harper, Barbara S. Lane, and George P. Murdock.
4. Unfortunately, since the only age data collected in the field were for husbands and wives, I have had to use expected ages rather than average or mean ages throughout most of this paper (see note 2 above).
5. The Tiwi believe that sexual intercourse is the direct and only cause of menarche.

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